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UNCLAS MUSCAT 000471

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI (TROBERTS), NEA/PPD (CWHITTLESEY),  
NEA/PPD (PAGNEW), IIP/G/NEA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAQ](#) [SCUL](#) [OIIP](#) [TSPL](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: MUSCAT BOOK FAIR: SALES DOWN, LESSONS LEARNED

[¶11.](#) Summary: Embassy Muscat exhibited 85 American titles at the Muscat International Book Fair. We sold a total of 120 Arabic-language books, down from previous years. We plan to substantially increase the number of English titles we offer next year. End summary.

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Getting the Books out There  
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[¶12.](#) Description of Activity: For the eighth consecutive year, Embassy Muscat exhibited books at the Muscat International Book Fair (February 22 - March 4, 2005), offering 85 RBO Arabic titles for sale on a variety of topics. We sold 120 books for a total sale of USD 1,082. The sales were lower than sales figures in 2004 and 2003 in which 165 and 139 books were sold, respectively. The reduction in sales was due in part to increased competition and our failure to offer any books in English.

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Who's Buying What?  
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[¶13.](#) Our number one seller was "Democracy in America," with 18 copies sold. A weak second-place seller was "The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality" (seven copies). There was a clear interest in English-language books, which unfortunately we did not offer. Many visitors to the Embassy booth were looking for English-language books and assumed that they would find a broad selection.

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Actions To Take  
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[¶14.](#) The Embassy will dedicate more resources to publicity, contract proactive sales people, and liaise with book sellers, students, and librarians prior to the fair to gain a better understanding of what Omani readers seek in terms of books related to the U.S. We also hope to leverage developments in the country to sell more. For example, the Embassy will incorporate a number of international trade and business books into its inventory to satisfy interest generated on the topic by the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement Negotiations that began this month in Muscat.

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Spreading Values  
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[¶15.](#) Through our participation in the fair, the Embassy hopes to increase understanding of American values, encourage the free flow of information, and expand respect for U.S. expertise in key sectors. The Embassy's MPP goal for this project is Democratic Systems and Practices. The audience was a self-selecting audience numbering more than 450,000 people over ten days, according to press reports.

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Influencing Others  
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[¶16.](#) Result/Impact: The long-term impact remains to be assessed. An average of 150-200 people per day visited the Embassy's booth.

BALTIMORE